

# Driftwood Resort Heads For Rebuild

## THE EAST HAMPTON INDEPENDENT

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The Driftwood Resort in Napeague is about to undergo changes. The only question for the owners of the condominium complex is, do they want a major renovation, or a tear-down and rebuild? The architect they have brought in, Robert Young of Robert Young Architects, a firm that does high-end design work in both Manhattan and on the East End, knows his preference: "I am an architect. I like to build things," he told the East Hampton Town Planning Board on May 1.

Young was making an initial site plan review presentation to the planning board on behalf of the condominium owners, along with Laurie Wiltshire of Land Planning Services, titled Driftwood Master Plan.

The Driftwood owners have shares in the company, which owns all the units, and rent out the rooms, like any hotel.

The site is about 10 acres in size, running from Montauk Highway to the Atlantic Ocean. According to the memo about the preliminary site plan prepared by Eric Schantz, a senior planner for the Town of East Hampton, the property "contains duneland habitat and beach vegetation, as well as a primary bluff crest." It also "has expansive areas of wetlands to the north along Montauk Highway."

"The board of the Driftwood hired me to look at a master plan," Young told the board. Every year, he said, Driftwood board members find themselves spending more and more money to keep the buildings on the property maintained. Young and Wiltshire presented the board with two very different plans.

If the Driftwood owners elect to do a comprehensive renovation, it would be done in two phases. Instead of tearing down the building on the western side of the property, a second floor would be added, with one bedroom per unit. Meanwhile, the one-bedrooms on the lower floor of the building would be removed, so there would not be a net growth in bedrooms, which would have to be accounted for in the Driftwood's septic flow calculations.

If, on the other hand, they were going to tear down and rebuild, the new western building would have to be raised, to make it Federal Emergency Management Administration compliant. In fact, much of the property is either not FEMA compliant, or is not hurricane-proof, Young said. The board was also troubled by the swimming pool, which appears to either be in or just above ground water level. Where to place the pool in a tear-down and rebuild plan was discussed. Board member Randy Parsons jokingly suggested putting the pool on the beach.

The board was clearly more intrigued with the idea of starting fresh. For example, Young pointed out to the board that, currently, "there is a lot of asphalt in that parking area. There would be an opportunity to reconfigure it in a much more sensitive way." That appealed to board member Louis Cortese, as did the idea of a new septic system.

"A lot of people were not fans of these getting built 60 years ago," board member Ed Krug said. "This could be an opportunity to do something that is environmentally sensitive."

Samuel Kramer, the board's chairman, warned that the applicants will need to get special permits from the town's Zoning Board of Appeals. "This is duneland," Kramer said. "You're going to go before the ZBA for natural resources special permits. They are going to care a lot about the dunelands."

In any event, it appears that the Driftwood will be winterized, triggering the need for a new septic system.

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